

GENERAL ORDER ON THE FINAL THESES PREPARATION AND DEFENCE

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 1.1. General Order on the Final Theses Preparation and Defence (hereinafter – Order) describes the general requirements for final theses preparation and defence of first- and second-study cycle integrated and non-degree studies.
- 1.2. Special requirements for preparation, formatting, and presentation for defence of final theses are set by faculties, the subdivisions of which (i.e. departments) prepare methodological guidelines. In accordance with a specific study programme, they set the requirements for final theses, their preparation, defence, and special evaluation criteria.

II. PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE FINAL THESES

- 2.1. A Final thesis (final art project) is an independent scientific research, project, or creative project work performed at the end of the study programme and intended for the acquisition of analytical, research, artistic, and other cognitive and functional competencies.
- 2.2. The preparation and defence of the Bachelor thesis consist of not less than 12 credits.
- 2.3. Integrated studies are completed with the assessment of graduate's competencies during the defence of the final thesis (project), which consist of not less than 15 credits.
- 2.4. The preparation and defence of a Master thesis consist of not less than 30 credits.
- 2.5. Final paper of non-degree pedagogical studies consists of not more than 3 credits.

III. PREPARATION OF THE FINAL THESES

- 3.1. Research fields and topics for final theses are defined by departments.
- 3.2. Topics for theses (research areas) are announced publicly by the departments and on the website (intranet) of the faculty, and the teachers working in the field are indicated.
- 3.3. The suggested topics for theses (research areas) are announced during the semester prior to the beginning of the final theses preparation.
- 3.4. The chosen topic shall be agreed upon with the research supervisor.
- 3.5. The chosen and agreed upon topics and supervisors are approved by the Head of the Department not later than the end of the first month of the final semester.
- 3.6. The topics of final theses are approved by the Faculty Dean's Decree upon proposal of the Head of the Department not later than a month prior to the date of public defence. The topics of final theses approved by the Dean's Decree are not changed. Only the title of the final thesis can be specified.
- 3.7. Upon the Decree of the Dean, the topics of final theses may be distributed and approved with regard to the topic areas (research areas).
- 3.8. When carrying out the research of the final thesis, the student has to follow the requirements of research ethics, which are specified in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation prepared at a studies subdivision.

- 3.9. The student writes the thesis independently according to the methodological requirements of the Department, consulting with the research supervisor.
- 3.10. The research supervisor consults at an appointed time.

IV. STRUCTURE AND FORMATTING OF THE FINAL THESES

- 4.1. The following structural parts of the final theses are obligatory for all VMU programmes:
- Title page (Annex 1, 2, 3);
 - Outline;
 - Summary in one of the main languages of the EU (1 page);
 - Introduction which introduces the research problem and presents all main research parameters: research object, aim, objectives, and hypotheses (2-3 pages);
 - The body part, the structure and contents of which are regulated by Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation set at each studies subdivision of the University;
 - Conclusions and recommendations;
 - List of references and other information sources;
 - Appendices.

On the third cover of the thesis, an envelope with a CD shall be attached, which shall contain the full text of the final thesis, data matrix (in the case of a quantitative research), survey protocols (in the case of a quantitative research), photos, software codes and other documents.

- 4.2. Formatting of the final theses:
- 4.2.1. the final theses shall be written in correct Lithuanian, without mistakes; the ideas shall be developed clearly, coherently, understandably, and systematically. The theses shall be typed by computer without corrections and erasures. In specific instances, such as joint-degree study programmes or the specificity of the study programme, the final theses may be written in a foreign language;
 - 4.2.2. the recommended length of the final theses is the following:
 - Bachelor theses: from 35 to 45 pages without appendices;
 - Master theses: from 50 to 70 pages without appendices;
 - Papers for non-degree studies: from 40 to 50 pages without appendices.
 - 4.2.3. With regard to the study field, the length of the final theses may be changed. In such a case, it is indicated in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation prepared at the studies subdivision.
- 4.3. The main formatting requirements:
- 4.3.1. the text is printed on one side of A4 format page (210 x 297 mm) with the following margins: top and bottom 20 mm, left 30 mm, and right 10 mm;
 - 4.3.2. the pages are numbered except the title page;
 - 4.3.3. the page number is located at the centre of the bottom margin; it is in Arabic numbers and without dots and commas;
 - 4.3.4. the first line of each paragraph is indented from the left margin by 15 mm. The text is justified;

- 4.3.5. line spacing in the text is 1.5. Chapter titles are separated from the text by double spacing, and sections – by 1.5 spacing;
- 4.3.6. the theses are typed in Times New Roman font (unless indicated differently in Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation prepared at the studies subdivision); the main text should be in 12-point size;
- 4.3.7. the title of the theses and chapters are typed in capitalized bold letters, and sections – in low-case bold letters. The size of chapter titles is 16 pt, sections – 14 pt, and sub-sections – 12 pt.
- 4.3.8. the theses have to be bound.

V. PREPARATION FOR FINAL THESES DEFENCE

- 5.1. The final thesis can be defended only after completing the study programme. The department responsible for the study programme decides whether the study programme is completed.
- 5.2. The Faculty Dean, upon proposal of the Head of the Department, approves the Attestation Commission for final theses, consisting of three teachers, which has to review and assess the completed final theses.
- 5.3. The main function of the Attestation Commission for Master final theses is to assess whether all obligatory requirements for structure, contents, volume, and formatting have been fulfilled and to indicate which drawbacks have to be corrected. After this assessment at the department, the student may correct only the drawbacks indicated by the Commission until the specified date.
- 5.4. The conclusion of the Attestation Commission for Master final theses is recorded in the certificate provided to the Commission for the Public Defence of Final Theses (Annex 4).
- 5.5. No later than 10 working days prior to the beginning of public defence of the final theses, students of all study cycles and types of studies must provide the faculty with one copy of an appropriately prepared and bound work along with an electronic version of the final thesis.
- 5.6. The supervisor of the thesis shall write a report (the recommended form is provided in Annex 6) not later than five days prior the beginning of public defence. The supervisor's participation at the public defence is desirable.
- 5.7. The Head of the Department appoints the reviewer of the thesis not later than ten days until the beginning of the public defence. The thesis is presented to the reviewer not later than five working days until the public defence.
- 5.8. The Evaluation Commission for the Public Defence of Final Theses (hereinafter – Commission), consisting of 3–5 competent specialists of the study field (fields) – scientists (artists), practitioners /professionals, social partners – is appointed by the Rector's Order upon proposal of the Faculty Dean.
- 5.9. If the topics of the final theses are approved according to the topic areas (research areas) upon the Dean's Decree, several Evaluation Commissions for Theses Defence may be appointed under the permission of Vice-Rector for Studies.
- 5.10. The Head of the Commission or at least one Commission member has to represent another institution (social partners, alumni representatives, or scholars from other universities and science institutions).

- 5.11. For the programmes where the study field regulations are approved by the Minister of Education and Science the composition of the Commission for Final Theses shall conform to the regulation requirements.
- 5.12. If the supervisor's report and/or the Commission certificate (for Master final theses) state that the thesis does not meet the requirements and is not recommended for public defence, the student can address the Commission with a request to defend his/her thesis, explaining the motives in written form. The request and the thesis have to be submitted to the Commission Secretary not later than three days prior to the appointed beginning of public defence. After considering the student's request, the Commission decides whether the student can defend his/her thesis.
- 5.13. The reviewer submits the review about the thesis to the Commission for Public Defence of Final Theses not later than the day of final defence and to the student – not later than one day prior to the public defence (the recommended review form is provided in Annex 5). The reviewer's participation in the public defence of final theses is desirable.

VI. DEFENCE OF THE FINAL THESES

- 6.1. The defence of the final theses is public and takes place at a Commission session appointed by the Rector's Order.
- 6.2. The public defence of the theses proceeds during the exam session.
- 6.3. The final exams for all art study area students take place in one concert space, which is chosen and approved during the meeting of the department.
- 6.4. The following documents are provided to the Commission for Theses Defence:
 - 6.4.1. Rector's Order on the Formation of Qualification Commission;
 - 6.4.2. Dean's Decree on the Permission to Defend Final Theses;
 - 6.4.3. The public defence schedule of the Commission for Theses Defence;
 - 6.4.4. Protocol forms for the defence of final theses (sample form is provided in Annex 9);
 - 6.4.5. Students' final theses (two copies);
 - 6.4.6. Reviews of theses and supervisors' reports (the recommended forms are provided in Annexes 5 and 6);
 - 6.4.7. Declarations signed by the students which confirm that other people's copyright is not breached (Annex 7);
 - 6.4.8. Certificate of the Department Commission on the conformity of the final theses to the obligatory requirements (Annex 4);
 - 6.4.9. Evaluation criteria of the final theses defined in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation of each study subdivision of the University;
 - 6.4.10. Master students provide License Agreements where they sign and confirm the completeness, authenticity, and access to their theses at VMU e-Publication Repository (VMU ePub, <http://etalpykla.vdu.lt>) and the Lithuanian Academic e-Library (<http://www.elaba.lt>).
- 6.5. The Secretary of the Commission for Theses Defence is responsible for presenting the documents to the Commission session.
- 6.6. The thesis may be defended at a closed Commission session if secret data have been used and the results of the thesis should not be publicized upon request of the research supervisor, Head

of the Department, the student, or the institution. In such a case, the Commission announces a part of the session closed. The research supervisor and the reviewer may participate in the defence session in addition to the Commission members and the student. The participants of the closed defence sign the Confidentiality Promise (Annex 8).

- 6.7. The Commission follows the procedures of final theses defence defined in the Study Regulations and specified in this General Order.
- 6.8. During the public defence, the author of the final thesis presents his/her work, indicating the problem of the research, the aim, objectives, describes the research object, the results obtained, the reliability of the methods applied, provides the conclusions and grounds them, as well as provides recommendations. The presentation of a Bachelor thesis takes up to ten minutes; the presentation of the Master thesis takes up to 15 minutes.
- 6.9. After the presentation, the Commission members and other persons, participating in the public defence, can ask the student questions. After this discussion, the student answers the questions formulated by the reviewer.
- 6.10. If the supervisor and the reviewer cannot participate in the defence session, their reviews are read by the Commission Secretary.
- 6.11. After a successful student's defence of the thesis, the Commission suggests appointing a degree and (or) qualification indicated in the study programme.
- 6.12. The Chairperson of the Commission enters the evaluation into the Protocol of Final Theses Defence.
- 6.13. The Protocol of the Final Theses Defence is signed by all Commission members, participating in the defence.
- 6.14. The Protocol of the Final Theses Defence is provided to the Department not later than one day after the defence.
- 6.15. The decision of the Commission is non-appealable. Appeals for procedural violations are considered on the basis of the order indicated in Study Regulations.
- 6.16. The Department presents the Protocols of Final Theses Defence, declarations signed by students, reviews, and supervisors' reports to the Office of Academic Affairs not later than two working days after the defence.
- 6.17. After the defence, the thesis is returned to the Department where it is stored according to the order set by the Faculty. The order of final theses storage is specified in Section 8 of the General Order.
- 6.18. The student who did not defend or was not able to defend the final thesis is expelled from the University.
- 6.19. The thesis may be defended for the second time after making an agreement with the university. This may be done during exams not earlier than half a year if a group of students is formed according to the Order indicated in Study Regulations (not less than five students). If the thesis is not defended for the second time after making a corresponding agreement, a new thesis has to be prepared.
- 6.20. The final thesis may be defended externally not later than in two years after signing the Agreement of External Studies if the thesis was prepared, submitted, and recommended to be defended during earlier study years.

VII. EVALUATION OF THE FINAL THESES

- 7.1. The final theses are evaluated after the defence in a closed Commission session, which is protocolled.
- 7.2. Each member of the Commission evaluates the final thesis separately. The final evaluation of the final thesis is equal to the arithmetic mean of all Commission members' evaluations rounded off to the nearest whole number. In the case of disagreement about the evaluation, the final decision is made by the Chairperson of the Commission. The Commission also takes into consideration the opinion of the reviewer and the supervisor's report. The reviewer and the supervisor only provide their opinion on the thesis but do not evaluate it. If the supervisor is the member of the Commission, his/her evaluation is not included when calculating the arithmetic mean.
- 7.3. The results of the final theses evaluation are announced by the Chairperson of the Commission after the session. The Chairperson generalizes the final theses and the defence procedure. Each person who defended his/her thesis is informed about the evaluation in written form.
- 7.4. The evaluation of the final theses is recorded in the Protocol of Commission Session and recorded into the summary table, on the basis of which a diploma supplement is prepared.
- 7.5. If the evaluation of the final thesis is negative, the student can defend his/her thesis not earlier than half a year if a group of students to defend their thesis is formed in conformity to the Order indicated in Study Regulations.
- 7.6. Members of the Commission evaluate the final thesis taking into consideration the requirements formulated in the present Order and the criteria defined in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation.

VIII. STORAGE OF THE FINAL THESES

- 8.1. Six days prior to the public defence day students of the Master programme submit the description of the final thesis (student's/author's surname, name, e-mail, title of the thesis, summary, key words, etc.) and the thesis itself in electronic format (PDF format with software readable text) to the e-Documents Information System of final theses of Lithuanian master students, doctoral theses and their summaries, and habilitation works (ETD IS). The instruction of submitting the thesis can be accessed at <http://biblioteka.vdu.lt/documents/pdf/ETDinstrukcija.pdf>.
- 8.2. The conditions of the theses access online are indicated:
 - 8.2.1. Free-accessible on the internet;
 - 8.2.2. Inaccessible during the indicated period.
- 8.3. The conditions of final theses access are based on the recommendations of the research supervisor and Department Commission.
- 8.4. Before the public defence of the thesis, the student prints two copies of the License Agreement from ETD IS and signs them, this way confirming the completeness and authenticity of the thesis and access conditions.
- 8.5. After defending the final thesis, the License agreements are signed by the Faculty Dean. One copy is handed to the student, while the other is transferred to the library.
- 8.6. A defended Master thesis is stored at ETD IS and at the Department in accordance with the Order on Final Theses Storage and Archiving. The thesis is accessible at VMU e-Publication

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Repository (VMU ePub, <http://etalpykla.vdu.lt>) and Lithuanian Academic e-Library (<http://www.elaba.lt>) in conformity to the conditions indicated in Section 8.2.

- 8.7. A defended Bachelor thesis is stored at the Faculty in accordance with the Order on Final Theses Storage and Archiving.
- 8.8. The thesis defended at a closed session is stored at the institution which initiated a closed defence. Only a summary of such a thesis is stored at the University.